

## **Alternative Preparation for Licensure: Frequently Asked Questions**

The frequently asked questions below refer to recent revisions to the Alternative Preparation for Licensure Policy. The revisions require several very significant changes to alternative licensure programs, first-time issuance of alternative licenses, and renewal of alternative licenses. The changes include:

- Elimination of first-time issuance of the Alternative Licenses A, C, and E;
- Implementation of Alternative Licenses Type I and Type II;
- Collaboration between local school systems and teacher training colleges and universities;
- Approval of Alternative Preparation for Licensure programs; and
- Mentoring of alternative licensed teachers.

Two acronyms, **IHE** and **LEA**, appear in the frequently asked questions. **IHE** refers to an institution of higher education that is an approved Tennessee teacher training college or university. **LEA** refers to a local education agency, sometimes referred to as a school system that employs teachers. The term **Policy** refers to the Alternative Preparation for Licensure Policy adopted by Tennessee Board of Education as revised November 3, 2006. The text of the **Policy** is accessible at the internet webpage [http://state.tn.us/sbe/Nov06/IVB\\_AltPrep\\_Lic\\_Policy.pdf](http://state.tn.us/sbe/Nov06/IVB_AltPrep_Lic_Policy.pdf).

**QUESTION 1:** What are the important dates to know regarding the implementation of the new Alternative Licenses Type I and Type II?

**ANSWER:** The dates that follow should be noted.

June 30, 2007 - The last date for the first-time issuance of Alternative Licenses A, C, and E that applies to school year 2006-2007.

July 1, 2007 - Alternative licenses Type I and Type II will begin being issued.

September 1, 2007 - The effective date of the Policy.

June 30, 2009 - With the exception of Speech Pathologist, alternative licenses A, C and E will expire; no further renewals will be available.

**QUESTION 2:** What IHEs may work with LEAs and vice versa regarding Alternative License Type I and Type II programs?

**ANSWER:** In order to offer an Alternative License Type I and/or Type II program, an IHE must have an approved program. In order for an LEA to employ individuals on a Type I or Type II license, they must have an affiliation with at least one IHE that has an approved Alternative Licensure program.

**QUESTION 3:** To hire individual teachers, is an LEA limited to working only with the IHE(s) where the initial affiliation occurred?

**ANSWER:** No. As long as an LEA has an affiliation with at least one approved IHE Alternative License Type I and/or Type II program, an LEA may work with any IHE approved program. Within the context of the Policy, the specific program conditions and requirements must be determined among the IHE partner, LEA partner, and teacher.

**QUESTION 4:** Once approved, may Alternative License Type I and/or Type II programs be revised?

**ANSWER:** Yes. Revisions may include, but are not limited to, additional IHE-LEA affiliations, revised applicant and candidate assessments, endorsements offered, and/or mentoring arrangements. The revisions must adhere to the requirements of the Policy. Notification of major program revisions should be submitted to the Office of Teacher Education and Accreditation.

**QUESTION 5:** What endorsement areas are available for Alternative Licenses Type I and Type II programs?

**ANSWER:** All teaching endorsement areas and School Counselors. Based on specific conditions described in the Guidelines associated with the School Counselor PreK-12 Licensure Standards, a School Counselor may be employed on an Alternative License Type I or Type II. Availability of specific endorsements may vary among approved programs. The professional school service personnel endorsements, Administrator, School Psychologist, School Social Worker, Audiologist, and Speech-Language Pathologist are not available for Alternative License Type I or Type II.

**QUESTION 6:** Must an IHE have an approved traditional licensure program in each of the endorsement areas it offers through an Alternative License Type I and/or Type II program?

**ANSWER:** With the exception of secondary endorsement areas (7-12 and 9-12), an IHE must have a current approved traditional licensure program in each of the endorsements (e.g., PreK-3, K-6, 4-8, K-12, PreK-12) offered through an Alternative License Type I and/or Type II program. Regarding secondary endorsement areas, as long as an IHE has at least one current approved secondary licensure program, it may offer Alternative Licensure Type I and/or Type II in any secondary endorsement area.

**QUESTION 7:** For teacher candidates, how is content knowledge of the endorsement areas(s) determined?

**ANSWER:** There are three options for determining content knowledge.

1) Candidates must have an acceptable major in the endorsement area, 2) document that they have at least 24 semester hours in the teaching content area, or 3) verify that they have passed one required Praxis II content exam for each endorsement area sought. For endorsement areas that have more than one Praxis II content examination, passing one examination is acceptable for first-time issuance of an alternative license. Reading Across the Curriculum examinations do not meet the Praxis II content requirement. For full licensure, all applicable Praxis II examinations must be passed.

**QUESTION 8:** To begin teaching on an alternative license, what is the main difference between an Alternative License Type I program and an Alternative License Type II program?

**ANSWER:** An Alternative License Type I program requires the teacher candidate to complete a pre-service orientation component. The pre-service orientation component typically occurs during the summer prior to employment as a teacher of record. An Alternative License Type II program requires the teacher to complete the orientation component during the first year of employment. Typically, an Alternative License Type II program is for teacher candidates who are unable to complete a pre-service orientation component prior to employment as a teacher of record.

**QUESTION 9:** What is the basis for determining the teacher preparation content of an Alternative Licensure Type I or Type II program?

**ANSWER** The teacher preparation content is based on eleven core professional education competencies. The eleven core professional education competencies are included with the Policy as Appendix B.

**QUESTION 10:** May the programs of study vary among alternatively licensed teachers who are working with the same approved IHE program?

**ANSWER:** Yes. As part of the admission process, an individualized assessment of each program candidate should be done. The assessment process should incorporate multiple factors including but not limited to previous college course work, degrees, and professional and related experiences. Based on the result of the admission assessment, which may indicate prior acquisition of core professional education competencies, teachers' programs of study may vary and vary significantly.

**QUESTION 11:** May more than one endorsement be listed on an Alternative License Type I or Type II?

**ANSWER** Yes. As long as it is verified the teacher has met the content knowledge for each endorsement in at least one of the three ways identified by the Policy.

**QUESTION 12:** If a teacher is hired on an Alternative License Type II, for the first-time, after the school year has started, must the teacher receive 100 hours of mentoring?

**ANSWER:** No. The required 100 hours of mentoring is based on and arranged for a full school year of employment. If a teacher is hired after the school year starts, the mentoring hours are pro-rated for the remainder of the school year.

**QUESTION 13:** Is it possible for a teacher who has been teaching on a valid Alternative License A, C or E to transition to an Alternative License Type I or Type II?

**ANSWER:** Yes; however, it is strongly encouraged that individuals complete the Alternative License A, C, or E program they started. To make the transition, the alternatively licensed teacher must meet the requirements for the transition that, within the context of the Policy, are determined by the IHE partner and the employing LEA partner.

**QUESTION 14:** If a teacher transitions from an Alternative License A, C, or E to an Alternative License Type I or Type II, what is the maximum amount of time available to teach on the Alternative License Type I or Type II?

**ANSWER:** The teacher may receive the initial issuance of the Alternative License Type I or Type II and, if the renewal requirements are met, may qualify for no more than two, one-year licensure renewals.

**QUESTION 15:** In order to hire teachers on Alternative Licenses Type I and Type II, are non-public schools required to follow the same process as public schools.

**ANSWER:** Yes. Non-public schools that want to hire teachers on Alternative Licenses Type I and Type II are subject to same provisions of the Policy and implementation procedures.

**QUESTION 16:** Is a teacher who holds a full valid teaching license and is completing the requirements for an additional teaching endorsement, eligible for an Alternative License?

**ANSWER:** Fully licensed teachers who want to add a teaching endorsement to a license are not eligible for an Alternative License. In regard to a School Counselor endorsement, a fully licensed teacher may qualify for an Alternative License to be employed as a School Counselor if the relevant conditions described in the Guidelines associated with the School Counselor PreK-12 Licensure Standards are met.

**QUESTION 17:** Is it possible for someone to qualify for an Alternative License for the purpose of renewing an expired full license?

**ANSWER:** Yes. Someone who wants to renew an expired full license must meet at least one of the content knowledge criteria identified by the Policy. The eligibility is a one-time-only opportunity and only the Alternative License Type II is available. Within one year of employment on an Alternative License Type II, the teacher must complete the licensure renewal requirements.

**QUESTION 18:** Will there be on-site evaluations of the IHE Alternative Preparation for Licensure programs?

**ANSWER:** Yes. The evaluation of the Alternative Preparation for Licensure programs will be conducted as part of State Board of Examiners (BOE) program approval visit to participating IHEs. Evidence that verifies the programs meet the requirements of the Policy (e.g., admission procedures, hour limits, mentoring, etc.) will be examined.

**QUESTION 19:** May an LEA work with out-of-state and on-line IHEs to hire teachers on an Alternative License?

**ANSWER:** Yes; however, only Alternative License Type II is available. Section VII of the Policy, titled *Out-of-State and On-line Alternative Licensure*, describes the conditions for hiring teachers on a Type II license.

**QUESTION 20:** Where is more information available about Alternative Preparation for Licensure?

**ANSWER:** For updated information about Alternative Preparation for Licensure, go to the following Tennessee Department of Education internet website address:

**[www.tennessee.gov/education/lic](http://www.tennessee.gov/education/lic)**